



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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Arrest made in 2006 illegal burning case in Ventress

BATON ROUGE – A resident of New Roads was arrested today following an investigation on the illegal burning of Pentachlorophenol, also known as PCP, a wood preserving chemical, in an open fire pit in Ventress.

Victor Mougeot, 70, was arrested for the activity which occurred on June 29, 2006. Mougeot's neighbors were exposed to the resulting noxious smoke plume and required medical attention. His arraignment is scheduled for September 9, and his bond is set at \$25,000.

Mougeot, in accordance with the property purchase agreement with the property's owner, had been clearing out his belongings and burning them in a fire pit since early that morning. DEQ Surveillance personnel responded to the complaint on July 5, 2006, and took soil, air and water samples. The results showed that PCP was burned in the open fire pit and that other contaminants such as Dioxins and Furans were present in significant amounts. Dioxins and Furans are groups of potential contaminants of PCP and combustion by-products which are particularly toxic in small amounts. Air monitoring results showed volatile compounds near the burn pit.

"The enforcement of environmental crimes is of paramount interest to our state when offenders choose to endanger the health and well-being of our citizens," said Beau James Brock, Assistant to the Secretary of DEQ. "DEQ-CID is committed to protecting the public from illegal dumping and preserving a fair business environment for the countless number of honest businesses who work within the law."

Mougeot was arrested for two felonies: illegal disposal of hazardous waste which endangered human life & health, and for the illegal disposal of a hazardous waste substance. If convicted, Mougeot could face a fine of not more than \$100,000 per violation and costs of prosecution, or imprisonment with hard labor for not more than ten years, or both.

An arrest does not constitute guilt in a criminal case. All evidence compiled during the investigation is presented to area prosecutors to determine if formal charges are warranted.

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